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Letter dated 23 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 13 January 1999 (A/53/795) from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica addressed to you in connection with my letter of 19 November 1998 (A/53/685).

In paragraph 1 of the letter in question (A/53/795), we regret having used the term "military" to describe the armed national defence forces which the Government of Costa Rica is seeking to transport on the basis of a right to freedom of navigation that is not permitted under the Jérez-Cañas Treaty. This involuntary error may be attributed to the linguistic habit of referring to the armed forces responsible for guarding national borders as "military" forces. Nevertheless, we apologize for not having used the name given to the armed forces of Costa Rica by the laws of that State.

With regard to paragraph 2, I wish to reiterate that there is no dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica concerning matters of territorial sovereignty or any other matters. As far as Nicaragua is concerned, both Nicaraguan sovereignty over the San Juan River and Costa Rica's right to freedom of navigation for purposes of trade along a stretch of the river are clearly established in the Jérez-Cañas Treaty of 1858 and the Cleveland decision of 1888. Both of these instruments remain in force and are scrupulously observed by Nicaragua.

Lastly, Sir, Nicaragua enjoys excellent relations with Costa Rica and reiterates its firm desire to continue to strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation that unite the Governments and peoples of the sister Republics.

I should be grateful if you would have this clarification circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 44.

(*Signed*) Alfonso **Ortega Urbina**
Permanent Representative

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